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THE BARR COLONY AFTER 3 YEARS

(Special Correspondence to The Toronto Globe.)

Lloydminster, Sask., July 4 - "Where is Lloydminster?" the average eastern reader is quite likely to ask in reading this date line, and not without reason, for it is difficult to publish maps fast enough to keep pace with the changing geography of the west. Well, Lloydminster is one of the new towns along the Canadian Northern railway, and is situated about 650 miles northwest of Winnipeg [sic] and 160 miles northeast of Edmonton. It has a population of 600 or 700 people, and it is named after the Ven. O. E. Lloyd, archdeacon of Saskatchewan. Probably most readers will recollect that Mr. Lloyd was forced by circumstances to assume the leadership of the so called "Barr colony" when that company threatened to come to grief three years ago this summer at Saskatoon. The perpetuation of his name in Lloydminster is part of his reward; the rest he doubtless finds in a knowledge of the fact that the town is the centre of a great settlement of prosperous and contented Canadian citizens.

Not much has been heard of the "Barr colony" during the past year or two. Three years ago this summer it was the incident of the day in the Canadian west, but three years represent a long period in these rapid days, and the two thousand raw English settlers of the summer of 1903 have been absorbed into the country, and are not now to be distinguished save by a trifling difference of accent from the settlers that have come in from eastern Canada and the western states, and settled around and among them. Of course they are in one sense of the word "a colony," and they were dissociated from

the name Barr before they were settled in this district; it is by this title, however, that they will be best identified in the mind of the reader.

They have spread themselves out over the land for twenty miles north and southand forty miles east and west of this point, and they are mingled with the men of all the other English-speaking nations that are making their homes on the Canadian plains. Undeniably the experiment of the colony was of a somewhat dubious character. It was undertaken by the wrong parties, and was characterized by the mismanagement and misunderstanding that seem inseparable from undertakings that involve the intimate affairs of a mass of people gathered higgledy-piggledy together unknown to each other and associated only by accident. In its details the Barr colony was almost wholly a failure. In its general results it has proved to be wholly a success.

These English settlers were, as I pointed out in my Battleford letter, the real pioneers in a district which it is confidently predicted will show in the census taken last week a population sufficient to elect a new member of parliament. Three years ago the coyote and the antelope had the land to themselves.

Lloydminster has nothing about it to distinguish it from any of the numerous other new towns. It is in no way distinctively English. It sprang out of the English colony, but the English settlers soon went on the land, and the town has been made by eastern Canadians and western Americans, with the usual flavor of other races. Enumerating precisely the institutions and business houses of the town, I find they are as follows:

5 general stores.

3 lumber yards.

2 hardware stores.

3 hotels.

1 billiard hall.

1 bank (the Bank of Commerce).

5 restaurants.

1 brickyard.

3 churches.

1 private school.

2 barber shops.

3 millinery shops.

3 bakeries.

1 public school.

1 newspaper.

4 butcher shops.

2 law offices.

1 telephone central office.

2 blacksmiths.

1 wholesale liquor shop.

1 immigration hall.

1 chopping mill.

3 implement firms.

3 real estate offices.

1 district land office

3 firms of contractors.

2 furniture stores

2 harness shops.

2 livery stables.

1 public hospital

1 skating rink

2 resident physicians.

3 land guides.

1 seed and fruit merchant.

2 tailor shops.

2 fruit and stationery stores.

Canadian Northern station.

That is what Lloydminster consists of apart from the houses and the people, and it is in its way a copy of every other little town on the prairies, with a necessary variation in the proportions of the elements. As the towns grow a little larger they attract factories and wholesale houses, and it is entirely likely that the pioneers of these bigger industries will arrive in Lloydminster before the summer is over, for the town is the recognized centre of a large settlement in which the original English settlers predominate.

The townsite lies clean, high and dry and the buildings on the whole are neat and substantial. They are of course almost wholly of lumber, but are for the most part painted, and sidewalks are already down on practically every street. The prairie around is very little wooded, but sometimes rolling. There are two pleasant homesteads just north of the town, where the land lies slightly higher and two comfortable looking houses can plainly be seen from the Canadian Northern station. One is the home of Archdeacon Lloyd, the other is that of Mr. George Flamank, the Dominion Lands sub-agent here. This last was one of the first homesteads located, and it is needless to say, was located before Mr. Flamank received the appointment of lands agent, the regulations of the interior department strictly prohibiting any land dealing or even homestading by its officials.

The Lbydminster land office is, as stated in a previous letter, a sub-agency of the Battleford district, and any figures of settlement

obtained here are a portion only of those already given in relation to Battleford. It is interesting, however, to take a few figures secured from Mr. Flamank illustrating further the extent of the movement into the district, and the remarkable increase shown this spring over last. The entries for homesteads for the first six months of the present year and of last year respectively are as follows: -

	1906.	1905.
January...	41	17
February.	20	26
March...	104	43
April...	237	76
May	146	97
June	183	161

June had still a day or two to run when I obtained the figures. All day long the landoffice is the scene of active inquiry. Word has to come from Battleford before an application for homestead filed here or at any sub-office is accepted as the same homestead may have been applied for elsewhere in the district. Most intending settlers are too impatient to await the relatively slow process of the mails, and the verdict at Battleford is obtained by wire. Ten men had applied for homesteads on the particular day I visited Mr. Flamank's office, and several of them were anxiously awaiting replies from Battleford to say their title was good.

It was a delightful walk out to the house of Archdeacon Lloyd. It lies about a mile out on the prairie, which in this region seems especially to abound in wild flowers, and the grass was spangled exquisitely with blossoms of every conceivable hue. There were patches of bush here and there, and wielding an axe at one such cluster was

a sturdy old man, of whom I asked which of the two houses near was that of Mr. Lloyd. When the old man replied in the soft voice of the London cockney that "Mr. Lloyd's 'ous is howver there, sir," I thought I recognized a member of the Barr colony, and one could not help feeling that it was a fortunate train of circumstances that had enabled this plucky old Londoner to exchange the fogs and swarms and despair of the great city for the scene that surrounded him at the moment. I was fortunate in finding Archdeacon Lloyd at home, fortunate because the diocese extends some hundreds of miles, and he is oftener on the rail or the trail than on his homestead. The archdeacon will be remembered by many as a former chaplain of the Queen's Own Rifles, and with the regiment he tramped all over this region in the days of '85, so that his connection with the land is not of recent date. Mr. Lloyd was more than pleased to discuss the position of the English settlers with whom he came here in 1903. He came out, it should be mentioned, as chaplain, having been appointed such by an English church missionary organization, to become an official of which he had gone to England a year or two earlier. Mr. Lloyd is by nature an optimist, and his optimism had doubtless a good deal to do with rescuing the colony of settlers from the dangers that beset them three years ago.

At one point in their history, I am told on good authority, the finances, and perhaps the spirits of the newcomers, were so low that Mr. Llody [sic] mortgaged the whole of the year's stipend coming to him from the church missionary organization as a partial guarantee for a loan of $3,000 contracted by him and others through a bank at Prince Albert by which they were enabled to get supplies at living prices into the settlement. The settlers had spent much more money than they had counted on doing in getting to this point, and few of them had anything left. The harpies who are always willing to fasten on the unfortunate or

mistakes of others were not lacking, and prices for the necessities of life had been rushed up to a ruinous degree.

"You cannot imagine the pluck shown by the great majority of these people," said Mr. Lloyd, "once they decided to stay here. Everything was so disorganized and in such a hopeless muddle after they arrived here that at one time they were on the point of abandoning their project and returning to England as they best could. I had remained behind at Saskatoon because of the outbreak of an epidemic, while the English settlers were camped there, and when I reached this place I found every waggon pointed east. We had a public meeting and threshed the whole thing out, and it was decided to wait a little longer. You must remember that very few of these people had any practical knowledge of agriculture. The colony was just a section of the whole population of England, as it were, and contained shoemakers and shopkeepers, carpenters and clerks, painters, bakers, butchers, a little almost of everything, and a few farmers. One quite elderly man, for instance, had been a tiny shopkeeper in Holloway, London. He certainly took chances in coming, and had fortunately left his family at home. He was simply determined to succeed. He worked like a hero all that winter, freighting all through the coldest weather - and the winter of 1903-4 was everywhere the coldest for many years. He freighted and freighted, and when the spring came he went on his homestead and broke land. Now he has his family around him, his house up, his farm in good shape and you could not coax him back to London.

"Another man was a cobbler from somewhere in Yorkshire, who got through the early hardships of the settlement, and had everything going well when along came a prairie fire and swept away everything - house, stock and crops. He was terribly disheartened, but did not give up. He had not a dollar in the world, but the land was still there.

He borrowed a little money to buy a team of horses, and started in to freight until he had means to begin again. He is on his feet again, and almost out of debt, apart from owning his quarter section.

"Certainly the first few months were very serious. We had no lumber and could not get any here in time to build for the winter. We had to throw up a few buildings of poles and clay. Some of them you will see still standing in the town. We got up one good wooden building, which is now used as a hospital. That winter we used it for everything, and I had a couple of small rooms in it for residence. Most of the men had gone to their land, and when we saw that the winter was likely to be a severe one we sent word around urging that they should come into the town for their first winter and escape some of the hardships they would suffer out there alone on the land. Most of them came in, and all through the winter that building was used for all kinds of public purposes, day after day and night after night, and for service on Sunday. When spring came the settlers declared that if that was the worst Canada could do in the way of winter there was nothing to be afraid of, and I think they will admit today that in other respects the winter was one of the pleasantest in their experience."

Mr. Lloyd gave me many other illustrations of the spirit and endurance shown during those early months, and of the rewards that have followed. The nearest railway points at that time, it must be remembered, were Saskatoon, 200 miles aff, and Edmonton, 160 miles away. Saskatoon was the cheaper for the majority of supplies. Even the few among the newcomers who had farmed in England found themselves strangers to the soil of the prairie, and had to learn their methods anew, though for the moment there were none from whom to learn. This great initial difficulty and the fact that every ton of supplies had to be freighted over

two hundred miles of rough trail were hard to overcome. The settlers held on, however. In the spring of 1904 a number of Canadians and Americans experienced in farming and in the business methods of the country had heard of the new rich agricultural district that was about to be pierced by the Canadian Northern, and they came in over the long trail. Some erected stores and went into business in the place that became known as Lloydminster, but the greater number took up homesteads in the surrounding districts and gave their English neighbors the benefit of their experience in other parts of the continent. The government erected an immigration hall, a mounted police post was established, a telegraph office started, a bank opened, and the little settlement began to feel that it could stand alone. Good seed was difficult to obtain the first year - 1904 - and little wheat was grown, though the result was excellent where tried, the product being of fine color and weight. Oats were reported by some men as running 100 bushels to the acre, a yield that amazed the settlers, though it is not so uncommon in the neighborhood of Edmonton. In 1905 larger areas were placed under cultivation. The new settlers had gained experience, and had been greatly heartened by the splendid results of the efforts already made. Many of them got a hundred acres under crop, and wheat was sown much more plentifully. It ripened early, and the yield was very heavy. The grain was of good color and weight, and the grade in almost every case was No. 1 hard. At last, in August, 1905, the first construction train passed through Lloydminster. It marked an epoch in the history of the town, and put and [sic] end at once to the more severe of the privations and difficulties. It was no longer necessary to haul supplies overland two hundred miles, to push and pull the teams from innumerable bogholes,to depend for a meal on one's skill

with a shotgun. The prices of commodities began to fall immediately, and were soon on a level with thosein other towns.

The towspeople have organized football, baseball and cricket teams, and in the winter two good hockey teams played each other and the teams of neighboring places at frequent intervals. There is no river at Lloydminster, but nestling among the low-lying hills to the east of the town is a charming little lake, wherehexcellent boating may be obtained. A rifle association exists also, with a range on the outskirts of the town. Altogether the little town is well equipped with all means of recreation.

A word regarding the number of English settlers may be interesting. I pointed out in a letter from Battleford that the total number of homesteads entered in this land district during the three years since 1903 was a little less than 15,000. Of that number the English colony has contributed in all about one-fourth. In the first place there were about 2,500 attached to the Barr colony. About a thousand of these were young men, who by agreement stop- cA line follows of pied type, " -n s t-s ld aiiaafM n sh cm emoo"s ped off at Winnipeg and endeavored to procure work there, and about two hundred of the remainder dropped off at Saskatoon or Battleford. That left about twelve hundred for the original settlement at Lloydminster. As soon, however, as the settlers here haa csic overcome the difficulties incidental to real pioneering they wrote their friends in Winnipeg and other friends in England regarding the richness of the soil and the certain success that awaited industry, and the young men left behind at Winnipeg, and others in England who have become interested, began to stream into the district, until it is estimated there are now about four thousand of these settlers. They have been woven quickly into the web of Canadian life, and are recognized on all sides as excellent settlers once they learn the

methods of the new land. None are dissatisfied, and practically none would go back to England. An advertisement for a quarter section of improved land in this vicinity recently brought only two replies. One came from a man who was willing to return because his wife's parents wanted her to be with them; the other from a man who, after all, only thought of returning if he got a good cash price for the farm.

There are still suggestions here and there of the slowness with which the English settler adapts himself to the new conditions, so that almost invariably the first year or two of labor are lost, and the settler himself is disheartened and inclined to blame the country rather than himself for his comparative failure. Many of the young men who have come in later are dilatory and unadaptive in their methods. A considerable proportion of them are ex-soldiers from South Africa, who could not settle down to their old pursuits on their return to Endland [sic], and find a difficulty here also in getting down to real work. The pinch of necessity and the example of their prosperous neighbors will have its effect in due time doubtless on these, too, and they will become substantial yeomen [sic] of the plains. It is impossible at least to hear of any who have as yet given up. The community is a very orderly one. Even the sale of liquor would have been prohibited in Lloydminster had the original settlers had their way, for 95 per cent of those at first located there voted against a license, and the license was obtained only by a resort to strategy by an Edmonton expert.

"Would you advise repeating the experiment of the Barr colony?" Archdeacon Lloyd was asked.

"I should be very sorry to see the experiment repeated under the same conditions, but with our experience here and under suitable conditions I should be glad to see large bodies of English settlers come

here. It seems to me only right that we should do our best to fill this country with the people who are crowding the old country. I know the English settler is a little difficult for the first year or two. He is very reluctant to part with his own ways and methods. He is keenly attached to England, and thoughtlessly makes foolish comparisons that are very irritating to the Canadians who hear them. It is no doubt because of these characteristics that he has succeeded in planting the English language and English laws in so many parts of the globe, and you cannot have a better settler once he adapts himself to the new conditions.

"I had a very interesting argument one day," continued Archdeacon Lloyd, " as to whether the average British settler or the Doukhobors were the best people to bring to Canada. The gentleman who talked with me, took the part of the Doukhobors, though a Scotchman himself, and insisted that such settlers were of more benefit to the country. Well, I am willing to admit that for the first year the Doukhobor is of more value to Canada, inasmuch as the result of his labor is more immediately felt than that of the Englishman. The second year they are more nearly equal, and in the course of three or four years the Doukhobor is nowhere in comparison, so far as his general usefulness as a citizen goes."

In conclusion I may say that it is quite possible that Lloydminster may become in time more than a local centre for this new district. There is good timber a few miles to the north, and underneath the forests coal is believed to lie, and there are in some minds already visions of big saw mills and coal mines that swell the little town to the rank of an industrial city. But these are things of the future. What is certain at the present time is that the Barr colony of 1903 is prosperous and contented here around Lloydminster in 1906.

F. A. A.